REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated May 7, 2004. Claims 1 to 20 are now pending in the application, with Claims 18 to 20 having been added. Claims 1, 9 and 17 are the independent claims herein. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for the indication that Claims 3 to 8 and 11 to 16 would be allowable if they were rewritten into independent form. However, Applicant has chosen not to amend these claims to be rewritten in independent form at this time, since it is believed that the corresponding base claims are allowable for at least the reasons set forth below.

The Office Action objected to the drawings for informalities. The drawings have been amended as recited above to address these informalities, and approval of the accompanying Replacement Sheets for Figs. 4 and 10 is respectfully requested. Accordingly, withdrawal of the objections to the drawings is respectfully requested.

The Office Action also objected to the title and to various portions of the specification for informalities. The title and the specification have been amended as deemed appropriate to address these informalities. No new matter has been added to the specification. Withdrawal of these objections is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 4, 6 to 9, 13, 16 and 17 were also objected to. These claims have been amended as deemed appropriate giving due consideration to the points raised in the Office Action. Withdrawal of the claim objections is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 9 and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,959,667 (Maeng) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,208,379 (Oya), and Claims 2 and 10 were rejected under 103(a) over Maeng in view of Oya and further in view of U.S. Patent

No. 6,542,191 (Yonezawa). Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

The present invention concerns a plurality of cameras that can be controlled in linked operation via a network. By way of example, a camera setting means defines which of the cameras connected to the network are to be linked, and a movement setting means defines the conditions and contents of linked movement of the linked cameras. Further, state information for the linked cameras (e.g., pan, tilt and zoom) can be monitored by way of a camera-state-information acquisition means. In the present example, when the state of a linked camera meets a condition for linked movement, the linked movement is started by a starting means, and an output means sends a control command corresponding to the contents of the linked movement to at least one of the linked cameras. As a result, when, for example, a user controls the movement of one of the linked cameras, at least one of the other cameras is controlled in linked movement with the camera being controlled by the user.

Referring to the specific language of the claims, independent Claim 1 is a camera control system for controlling a linked operation of a plurality of cameras via a network comprising camera setting means for setting a plurality of cameras connected to the network as cameras to be linked with one another, movement setting means for setting conditions and contents of a linked movement for each of the cameras set by the camera setting means, camera-state-information acquisition means for acquiring information relating to a state of at least one photographing parameter of the plurality of cameras set by the camera setting means, starting means for starting, when a camera satisfying the conditions of the linked movement set by the movement setting means is present based on the state information acquired by the camera-state-information acquisition means, the

contents of the linked movement corresponding to the conditions of the linked movement set by the movement setting means, and output means for outputting a control command corresponding to the contents of the linked movement to at least one camera to be linked with the camera satisfying the set conditions.

Independent Claims 9 and 17 are method and storage medium embodiments, respectively, that substantially correspond to Claim 1.

The applied art is not seen to disclose or to suggest the features the present invention. More particularly, the applied art is not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the feature of acquiring camera-state information relating to a state of at least one photographing parameter, starting, when a camera satisfying set conditions of linked movement is present based on the acquired state information, the contents of the linked movement, and outputting a control command corresponding to the contents of the linked movement to at least one camera to be linked with a camera satisfying the set conditions.

Maeng is seen to disclose a voice-activated camera system in which an array of microphones detects a voice and a locator calculates the approximate location from which the voice originates. A preset selector unit chooses one of a plurality of stored preset camera positions that is proximate to the voice, and outputs the preset data to a camera controller so that a camera can be controlled to move toward the voice. Thus, Maeng is seen to control each camera individually based on the location of the voice. In other words, there is not seen to be any linking of the movement of the cameras with regard to one another, but rather, each camera moves to a preset location independent of any other camera based on the location of the voice. Accordingly, Maeng is not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the features of acquiring camera-state information relating to a state of at least one photographing parameter, starting, when a camera satisfying set conditions of

linked movement is present based on the acquired state information, the contents of the linked movement, and outputting a control command corresponding to the contents of the linked movement to at least one camera to be linked with a camera satisfying the set conditions.

Oya and Yonezawa are not seen to make up for the foregoing deficiencies of Maeng. Oya is merely seen to disclose that a camera can be controlled via a network. However, Oya is not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the features of acquiring camera-state information relating to a state of at least one photographing parameter, starting, when a camera satisfying set conditions of linked movement is present based on the acquired state information, the contents of the linked movement, and outputting a control command corresponding to the contents of the linked movement to at least one camera to be linked with a camera satisfying the set conditions.

Yonezawa is merely seen to disclose an apparatus for providing control over a plurality of cameras via a network client, in which the client has the ability to assign a descriptive name to each camera. Thus, while Yonezawa may control a plurality of cameras, Applicant fails to see anything in Yonezawa in which the cameras are linked so that linked control over the cameras can be performed. Therefore Yonezawa is not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the feature of acquiring camera-state information relating to a state of at least one photographing parameter, starting, when a camera satisfying set conditions of linked movement is present based on the acquired state information, the contents of the linked movement, and outputting a control command corresponding to the contents of the linked movement to at least one camera to be linked with a camera satisfying the set conditions.
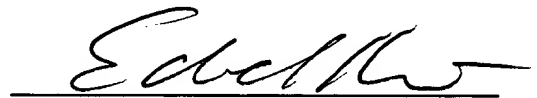
In view of the foregoing, Oya and Yonezawa are not seen to add anything that, when combined with Maeng, would have resulted in the present invention. Accordingly, all of Claims 1 to 20 are believed to be allowable.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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